

THE PROVIDENCE ★ REPORT

Fall/Winter 2002-2003

From the Office of Providence District Supervisor Gerry Connolly
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Volume XIII

A Message from Supervisor Connolly

As this issue of The Providence Report goes to press the November 5 election is just weeks away. Inside this issue you'll find information on many ballot questions, but I want to talk here about the one that has been the focus of most public discussion, the transportation referendum. This referendum — which asks voters to approve an additional half-cent sales tax that would be dedicated exclusively to specific transportation projects in Northern Virginia — represents an unprecedented opportunity for us to assert control over the future of our region. Never before have we been given the opportunity to take locally generated revenue and apply it entirely toward locally determined transportation priorities. The one-half percent increase in the sales tax is expected to raise \$140 million in one year, or \$5 billion over twenty years. At least 40 percent of the projects built with these funds will be mass transit.

The Dulles Corridor Rapid Transit project, the largest in the referendum at \$350 million, will have a major impact on curtailing development sprawl. Rail to Tyson's Corner and on to Dulles Airport will encourage development around transit stations, rather than in areas where commuting by transit is not an option. Fairfax County has already adapted our Comprehensive Plan to allow for compact, mixed use development around stations, allowing us to channel growth in jobs and population into smart, sustainable land use patterns, removing cars from our roads and improving air quality. One person commuting by mass transit prevents about 9.1 pounds of hydrocarbons, 62.5 pounds of carbon monoxide



Supervisor Connolly and members of The Seldom Scene during our Nottoway Nights free concert series. The folk group drew a record crowd of nearly 2,000 to the lawn of Hunter House at beautiful Nottoway Park.

and 4.9 pounds of nitrogen oxides from being discharged into the air each year.

Many referendum projects will benefit the Providence District, including extending Metrorail to Centreville and improving the Gallows Road/Lee Highway intersection. None of the funds will go to widen the Capital Beltway, though there will be improvements designed to enhance safety and traffic flow.

We all wish that the State would pay to solve our local transportation problems, but the reality is that Richmond does not have the money and we cannot afford to wait. Whatever state dollars would be available for Fairfax projects under current formulas will continue to come to us. The law prohibits the Legislature from reallocating any funds if the referendum passes. The transportation referendum provides an unprecedented opportunity for Fairfax County to take control of our own destiny now.

Sincerely,

Gerry Connolly

**Keep a Light On**

Streetlights help deter crime and enhance traffic and pedestrian safety. To help keep Fairfax County safe, citizens may report malfunctioning streetlights on public roads to Dominion Virginia Power's 24-hour, toll-free number, 1-888-667-3000 or on-line by visiting the County's Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/UTILITIES/Streetlight_Main.htm. This site provides a map of the electric utility service districts as well as information on the Fairfax County Streetlight Program. Please ensure you have adequate information regarding the location of the light, including a street address and/or pole number.

Fight the Flu

The Fairfax County Health Department will give flu and pneumonia vaccines to adults 65 and older and anyone with chronic cardiovascular and pulmonary disorders for a charge of \$11 for the flu vaccine and \$20 for the pneumonia vaccine. Medicare Part-B (non-HMO) will be accepted; Medicaid will be accepted for those in a high-risk category. Recipients must bring their identification cards. For information please call 703-246-2433. Inova Health Source's Fight the Flu campaign will hold flu clinics for all citizens. Please contact them at 1-877-895-5284 or online at <http://www.inova.com/flu/index.htm>.

Child Car Seats

As of July 1, 2002, all children under age six must be in a child safety seat or booster seat. Responsibility rests with anyone who provides transportation for a child six years and under. Children older than six must use a seat belt or approved car seat. If you are a grandparent, sitter or friend and need information about the new requirements, please call Supervisor Connolly's office. Help with safety seat installation and checks on whether your seat is properly installed are available at two upcoming clinics, November 25 and December 19, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Academy, 4600 W. Ox Rd.

Providence District Web Site

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/gov/bos/pd/homepage.htm

Monitoring/Preventing West Nile/Malaria

Among the serious concerns we face in our region is the confirmation of cases of West Nile Virus and Malaria, both diseases spread by mosquitoes. The County has treated thousand of storm sewer catch basins and standing water sites in an effort to suppress the mosquito population. You can protect your family by eliminating standing water where mosquitoes breed, including potted plant dishes, old tires, ditches and wheelbarrows. Clean birdbaths at least once a week and roof gutters and downspout screens regularly. If you've eliminated standing water and still have a mosquito problem, please call 702-246-2300 for assistance. West Nile is carried by crows and transmitted by mosquitoes that bite the crows. You can help reduce the crow population by eliminating food sources, such as trash in plastic bags, that they're attracted to. Storing garbage in lidded containers is required by law. Wear long, loose, light-colored clothing and use insect repellent when you are outside. Remember, most people bitten by an infected mosquito do not get sick and most who do suffer a mild flu-like illness. The onset of colder weather will allow time to review these concerns and our response to them. While we know treating breeding areas with larvicide is most effective, Supervisor Connolly has asked health officials to review the advisability of limited spraying in areas where infected mosquitoes or West Nile cases have been confirmed. The County Health Department asks you to report dead crows to 703-246-2300 to help with data collection.

**Raking It In**

We love our trees here in Providence District, but those beautiful Fall leaves do present challenges. Residents in County Leaf Collection Districts pay for vacuum leaf service. Other Fairfax County collection customers may put leaves in clear bags for pick up with yard debris. Yellow signs will go up a week in advance, notifying residents of the date that the County will begin vacuuming leaves in their area. Actual pickup days on each street vary depending on weather and other factors. For more information please call (703) 803-3322 or go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/leaf. Customers of private collectors should call those companies.

Winter in the Parks

We don't normally think parks when we're planning winter activities, but the Fairfax County Park Authority has plenty of ideas for families as the cold weather approaches. Learn to predict the weather from natural signs, participate in evergreen crafts workshops, build a birdhouse from recycled material, learn bird identification, enjoy guided animal watching or a hike along the Potomac River to search for waterfowl. Think about taking the children to an indoor water playground that includes water noodles, giant inflatables and water bubblers. RECenter pools offer a variety of activities for everyone. Providence centers include Oak Marr RECenter, 703-281-6501 and Providence RECenter, 703-698-1351. In addition, many park facilities feature shops for holiday gift buying. To find out more, visit the Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks or check out the latest issue of *Parktakes* magazine. Copies are available in our office.

Calling All Cell Phone Users

Most of us are unaware of the problem our 911 operators are facing due to accidental cell phone calls. Modern cell phones are programmed to automatically dial 911 when the "9" button is pressed. If our 911 center is overwhelmed with calls with nobody on the other end, then actual emergency calls can be delayed. An estimated 50% of cell phone 911 calls are accidental dialings! If you're in the grocery store and bump against a counter, your phone could be dialing 911. If a call-taker answers and doesn't hear anyone on the other end, she must determine if it's an actual emergency or an accidental dialing. Become a 911 partner. Take the time to deactivate your 911 feature. Go to "call settings" and choose the "off" option for the 911 dial.



Did You Remember?

You changed your clocks back from daylight savings time, but did you remember to change the batteries in your smoke alarms? Last year over 700 Fairfax County families were alerted to a fire in their home and escaped safely, thanks to a smoke alarm. If you didn't change your alarm batteries in October, please do it now.



Supervisor Connolly is sworn in by Clerk of the Court John Frey as a member of the Virginia State Parks Foundation Board of Trustees. Supervisor Connolly was appointed by Governor Mark Warner to a four year term on the State board.

Is Your HOA Self Managed?

If so, this is for you. Supervisor Connolly will host a round-table discussion in the Spring on the unique challenges faced by self-managed associations. This will be an opportunity to hear from experts and exchange experiences and solutions that have worked for others. To sign up for the HOA Round-table, please call our office and be sure to mention any topics or concerns you would like addressed.

Walk the Walk

Put on your walking shoes and help raise money for our local non-profits by participating in the 15th *Annual Help the Homeless Walkathon*, Saturday, November 23. The 5K walk begins between 4th and 7th Streets NW on the National Mall. On-site registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. and the walk will begin at 9:00 a.m. You can designate your favorite organization to receive funds you raise. Please visit the Web site at www.helpthehomelessdc.org or contact a Fairfax non-profit organization directly.

Volunteers Needed

The Fairfax County Meals on Wheels Program is facing a critical shortage of volunteers. There is an urgent need for volunteers for all three types of volunteer positions — group coordinator, driver coordinator and drivers. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Fairfax County Area Agency on Aging at 703-324-5846.

Board Imposes Fines, Reaches Agreement on Cable Conversion

We've been working hard to assure that citizens' concerns are addressed as Cox Communications works toward completion of its new infrastructure. When the Board of Supervisors approved the franchise with Cox in 1999 it required the new network be "substantially complete" by May 2002. This deadline came and went and the Board found Cox "in material breach of its franchise." After extensive negotiations, the County reached an agreement with Cox that requires the company to complete 92% of its network by August 31, 2003 and 95 % by September 30, 2003. As a condition of that extension, Cox must pay \$2,000 a day into an escrow account until 95% of the upgrade is complete. If 95% is not complete by September 30, the County will retain the fines. Cox may not pass along the cost of these fines to customers. Supervisor Connolly's decision to support the agreement was based in part on the burden that taxpayers would incur if a court battle became necessary. He was also concerned that if an agreement could not be negotiated it would result in disruption to neighborhoods and streets where projects are ongoing and affect service to consumers. Supervisor Connolly has been an outspoken advocate for consumers in this matter and will continue to monitor the situation carefully in the hope that this agreement will result in benefits for consumers.

Notary Services Now Available

We're pleased to announce that full time notary services are now available at our office. There is no charge for this service. It is suggested that you call ahead should the notary be out of the office at a meeting or site visit.

Place Your Bids Early

Help those in need and start holiday shopping early. On November 7, FACETS will hold their *3rd Annual Best of America Auction* at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax City. Tickets are \$20. Auction items include: airline tickets; beach get-aways; dinners for 2; decorated baskets filled with specialty items; handmade crafts and jewelry. For details, please contact FACETS at 703-352-3373 or online at www.facetscares.org. FACETS provides emergency intervention and educational programs for homeless and low income people.



Spring Environmental Workshop

As the colder months approach, here in the Supervisor's office we're already thinking Spring. That means planning for our annual Environmental

Workshop, an event Gerry launched as a free service to residents in 1999 and one that's now become a community tradition. We're very proud to say this is the only practical, hands-on event of its kind in the County. The 2003 workshop will be held at Luther Jackson Middle School on Saturday, April 5 from 9 a.m. to noon. For those of you who have never participated, we encourage you to come and learn with us. You'll have the opportunity to select two workshops from the numerous offerings. Past presenters include the International Dark Skies Association, the Virginia Native Plant Society, Fairfax County Wildlife Biologist Earl Hodnett, the National Wildlife Federation, the Eco-Stewards Alliance, the Fairfax County and Regional Park Authorities and more. Topics included environmental friendly management of storm water, preserving open space, creating wildlife habitats, advanced recycling, and more. If you have a suggested topic you'd like us to explore, please call Supervisor Connolly's office. Scouting and other student groups are welcome as well as garden clubs and community groups. Call us to be put on the mailing list.

Winter (Safety) Words to the Wise

Every year lives are lost, millions of dollars of property damage occurs and families are displaced because of improper disposal of fireplace ashes. Ashes retain enough heat to cause fires for several days. The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department offers these safety guidelines:

- DO NOT** discard ashes into any combustible container such as a paper or plastic bag, a cardboard box, or a plastic trash can.
- DO NOT** place ash container on decks, porches, or in garages.
- DO** put ashes in a non-combustible metal container with a lid.
- DO** pour water into the container to make sure the ashes are cool.
- DO** keep the ash can outside your home, away from combustibles.
- DO** have a safe, cozy winter season.

Vote November 5

There is a lot at stake at the polls this election, including a transportation referendum (see cover story), approval of bonds to buy open space and improve park facilities, approval of a public safety bond to help law enforcement maintain readiness and keep up facilities, approval of a higher education referendum that will allow State colleges, such as George Mason and the Northern Virginia Community College, to expand their service to the community. There are also two constitutional amendments and elections for the House of Representatives. Please educate yourself about these issues and go to the polls and exercise your right to vote. The Fairfax County Electoral Board can provide you with information by mail or you may visit the County Web site, www.fairfaxcounty.gov and go to the section marked "Citizenship and Voting."

Poll Times, Locations

The polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. In Providence District there are two changes this election: voters in the Pine Spring precinct will return to the newly renovated Pine Spring Elementary School at 7607 Willow Lane to vote and Ft. Buffalo precinct residents will vote at Second Baptist Church, 6626 Costner Dr., until the renovation of the James Lee Community Center is complete. Anyone who has questions or concerns about where they should vote may call the Electoral Board, 703-222-0776, or Supervisor Connolly's office.

Bring your I.D.

Please remember that no registered voter can be denied the right to vote, but you are now required to show identification at the polls in accordance with a law passed by the General Assembly in 2000. Acceptable forms of I.D. include a Virginia

Voter Information Card, a Virginia driver's license or special identification card issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles, a valid United States passport, a Military ID card, any federal, state or local government-issued ID card, an employer-issued photo ID card or a Social Security card. A voter who fails to bring acceptable ID to the polls may still vote after signing, under oath, an Affirmation of Identity, which is the voter's certification in writing that the name and address information provided to the election officials at the polling place is correct.



Above, left to right, Board Chairman Kate Hanley, Del. Jim Scott, Police Chief Tom Manger and Supervisor Connolly at ceremonies honoring the 200-plus police, firefighters, military personal and health-care professionals who participated in the Ride to Remember, a 200-mile, 4-day bicycle ride in honor of our fallen public safety and military personnel killed in the Attack on America. The ride between Battery Park, New York, and The Pentagon, raised over \$300,000 for Inova's Regional Trauma Center.

Public Meeting on Stormwater Management

Residents are invited to a public meeting on November 19, 7 p.m. at the County Government Center to help evaluate the County's stormwater management strategy, a plan aimed at protecting and restoring the quality of our water, waterways, stream valleys, and adjacent lands. The County is seeking input on how best to collect, detain, retain, and discharge the approximately 40 inches of rain that falls annually across the region and eventually makes its way to the Chesapeake Bay. The current program manages stormwater through a system of ponds and streams that draw from fairly large areas, supplemented by smaller ponds which control stormwater closer to the source. These features prevent flooding and control erosion, sedimentation, and pollution of the region's waters. The issue is how to meet the ecological, regulatory, safety, recreational, aesthetic, and economic needs of the community. Those planning to attend are encouraged to read the material that will be posted on the County's Web site under Announcements at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes>. Please register in advance by calling 703-324-5033.

The Battle of Richmond Circa 2003

The 2003 Legislative Session gets underway in Richmond on January 8, but the Board of Supervisors' Legislative Committee, chaired by Supervisor Connolly, has been working since early September, reviewing the issues likely to impact Fairfax County citizens and drafting the Board's Legislative Program, which will be released November 13. The public is invited to testify on the program at a November 18 public hearing. If you prefer to submit written comments, please send them to Supervisor Connolly and he will enter them into the record. The final County Legislative Program will be adopted December 9 and presented to the Northern Virginia delegation. The Legislative Committee has agreed on several draft positions on topics including state funding of public safety, education and human services. The draft program will also urge the Legislature to grant the County taxing authority equal to towns and cities so that Fairfax could lower its real estate tax, replacing it with revenue such as taxes on tobacco. The draft program will contain a number of specific initiatives, including those to enhance tree preservation, and will support proposals including prohibiting clerks who are minors from selling alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption. Supervisor Connolly's office will be glad to provide you with a copy of the draft program once it is released. During the session, Supervisor Connolly convenes the Legislative Committee every Friday at 4 p.m. at the Government Center in Conference Rooms 9 and 10 to discuss developments in Richmond and their impact on our County. These meetings generally last two hours and are open to the public. Please call to confirm a particular meeting, as developments in Richmond sometimes cause schedule changes. As many people are now aware, the State sends back to Fairfax County only about 19 cents of every tax dollar we generate. While we recognize the constraints caused by the current economic climate, the Board will urge Richmond to use this session to create more equitable funding formulas that will benefit education, health and human services and public safety in our community in the future. Please be sure to keep in touch with your State legislator during the session so he or she knows how you feel about funding and other issues. This type of feedback can be very effective and the advent of e-mail makes feedback easier. If you are unsure who your state representatives are or how to reach them, please call our office.

Providence Honors It's Volunteers: All Are Invited

Each year Supervisor Connolly's office partners with the Providence District Council (PDC) to thank the many residents who volunteer in their neighborhoods and for special events during the year. The party will be held this year at the Providence Rec Center, Friday evening, December 6 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tyson's Corner Center restaurants will provide a full buffet. An annual tradition is the presentation of the PDC's Citizen of the Year award. Supervisor Connolly will take the opportunity to honor residents who have participated in steering committees for many of his initiatives, including the Nottoway Nights steering committee, VolunteerFest and the Environmental Workshop. If your group or family volunteers in any way in your neighborhood or on area special events, please call our office. Supervisor Connolly would love the opportunity to thank you in person.

Supervisor Connolly Honored by Oakton Environmental Group

Supervisor Connolly was presented with the Local Official of the Year Award by the Hunter Mill Defense League (HMDL) at the environmental group's First Annual Community Service Awards in September. Awards were presented to "individuals and organizations that have improved the quality of life and historic preservation in the Hunter Mill Road corridor." Supervisor Connolly was selected for his work in acquiring and preserving parkland, negotiating the private donation of the site for the future Oakton Public Library and adding language regarding equestrian uses to the County's Residential Development Criteria. HMDL President Jeanette Twomey made the presentation during a reception at the home of Dr. Ralph and Janet Tener.

Adult Community Theater Thrives

The Providence Players at Frost are in their fifth successful season with tickets now on sale for the January run of *Crimes of the Heart* by Beth Henley. In May the troupe will perform *Harvey* by Mary Coyle Chase. Please call 703-425-6782 or e-mail providenceplayers@cox.net for ticket information.



Dulles Rapid Transit Project Update

There has been real progress in the effort to bring rail to and through Tyson's Corner on the way to Dulles Airport. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement outlined potential strategies from bus rapid transit to extension of Metrorail from West Falls Church. In Tyson's, four rail alignment alternatives were proposed. Three public hearings were held in July to give the public an opportunity to review the project and provide comments to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transit (DRPT), the project sponsors. The sentiment expressed was broad support for rail transit to serve Tyson's Corner. The next step was the release of the public hearing report in early October and, based on public comment, a locally preferred alternative (LPA) was recommended — Metrorail all the way to Dulles Airport and the "T6" alignment through Tyson's Corner. T6 would create four stops in Tyson's along Route 123 and Route 7 with one underground station. The Board of Supervisors will comment on the LPA before the Commonwealth Transportation Board meets in December to officially select the LPA for the project. More information and links will be available on Supervisor Connolly's website this fall.

Annandale/Gallows/Hummer

The designs have been completed for the improvement of the Annandale, Gallows and Hummer Roads intersection. The project will add left turn lanes to all four approaches to the intersection. A meeting will be held on November 12 at 7:30 p.m. in the Little Theater at Falls Church High School. Representatives from the Department of Public Works will be present the designs and answer questions.



The Joy of Giving

Make your holidays special by making them brighter for a family in need.

Homestretch, a local non-profit, will match you with a family who might not receive gifts this holiday season without

your help. Another way to help is by donating your old car. Homestretch needs donated cars to give to homeless families or to auction them for funds. Donations are tax deductible and all auction proceeds go to provide direct client services. For details call 703-237-2035 or email info@homstretch-inc.org.



Supervisor Connolly congratulates Captain Kevin Kincaid at the September ceremony honoring him as 2002 Career Firefighter of the Year. The award was established in 1985 to honor a firefighter "whose outstanding service and selfless dedication are in keeping with the highest traditions of The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department." Firefighter of the Year "is the most prestigious honor the department bestows upon one of its own."

Traffic Problems in Your Neighborhood?

Fairfax County, in coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), has a program to address problems like speeding traffic and excessive parking by non-residents on neighborhood streets: the Residential Traffic Administration Program (RTAP). RTAP is designed so the County and VDOT can work with neighborhoods to mitigate their traffic problems. The Residential Permit Parking District (RPPD) program provides for restricted parking along neighborhood streets that suffer from overcrowding due to non-resident parking. Often this occurs in communities adjacent to transit stations or high schools. The traffic-calming program allows for the installation of physical measures, including speed humps, raised crosswalks or stop signs, to slow cars on neighborhood streets that have a chronic problem with speeders. Both programs have specific qualifying criteria, mandatory levels of neighborhood support, and a prescribed process that must be followed before measures can be enacted. However, all RTAP programs begin with a call or letter to Supervisor Connolly's office. Please contact us for information.

VolunteerFest Alive and Well in Providence

VolunteerFest, our annual community-wide volunteer day, was postponed from it's original date in October because of safety concerns



surrounding the sniper shootings in the region. The Providence District VolunteerFest Committee is committed to seeing this important community-building event go forward and we are working on scheduling a new date in the Spring. Among the projects already planned is a collection in our schools for Food for Others, our local food pantry and our annual mini-golf tournament sponsored by the Greater Merrifield Business Association, Merrifield Garden Center, the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Fairfax County Police Department Bike Cops. We are planning many park clean-ups, a book collection for the County Detention Center, and many beautification projects at our schools. We are hoping that record numbers of individuals, civic associations, scouting groups and families will come out and join us for this wonderful community event. Please call Supervisor Connolly's office for information.

Gerry Connolly
Providence District Supervisor
8739 Lee Highway
Fairfax, VA 22031-2103

Must-Have Numbers

Providence Supervisor Gerry Connolly:
Phone: 560-6946 (TDD 207-9407) Fax: 207-3541
E-mail: provdist@fairfaxcounty.gov

Emergency		
Police/Fire/Ambulance	911	Power Outage 1-888-667-3000
Rape Crisis Hotline	360-7273	Cable Outage 378-8440

Adult Education	227-2200	Supervisor Connolly
Alcohol and Drug Services	359-7040	560-6946
Animal Shelter	830-3310	Traffic Tickets
Child Care	449-9555	246-3764
Consumer Affairs	222-8435	Trash Pick-up
Courts	691-7320	(County)
Dept. of Motor Vehicles	866-368-5463	802-3322
1-66 Disposal Sites	631-1179	VA Dept. of
Fastran	222-9764	Transportation
Fire/Rescue (Non-Emergency)	246-2126	383-VDOT
Human Services	222-0880	Voting Information
Office for Women	324-5730	222-0776
Park Authority	324-8700	<i>For a complete list of TTY numbers, call 803-7914 (TTY) or 222-0880 (voice).</i>
Police (Non-Emergency)	691-2131	
Tax Information	222-8234	
Recreation Classes	324-5550	
Recycling InfoLine	324-5052	
SACC	449-8989	
School Information	246-2502	
Senior Citizen Info	324-5411	